

The impacts of truancy in academic performance among secondary school students: A case study of Kigamboni Ward in Temeke Municipality

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Abstract- Truancy is any intentional unauthorized absence from [compulsory schooling](#). This refers to absences caused by students of their own free will and not caused by poor medical conditions. also refer to students who attend school but do not go to classes (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Truancy is the serious problem in Tanzania especially in cities. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training reported that in 2009/10 Form II has the highest number of student drop outs which stands at 9,627 per annum and the main reasons for drop out were truancy 36.2 % and pregnancies 20.4 % (URT, 2011) . Although some studies have been done on the matter, many have been focusing on the causes, without putting into consideration the impacts in academic performance. Therefore this study intended to investigate the impacts of truancy in academic performance among secondary school students.

The research findings indicated that 51.7% of the respondents agreed that truancy is a latent base for poor academic performance among secondary school students in Kigamboni ward. Then a wake-up call for government and society to redefine the effectiveness of the current education curriculum and education policies is needed. In contrary, poor performance in Tanzania secondary schools is not only caused by attendance characteristics alone but other factors such as like poverty, earl child pregnancy, drug abuse, poor parental guide, peer groups and lack of seriousness in classroom, also cause poor performance

From views expressed by respondents in the field, this research recommends that education stakeholders together with the government in collaboration with Ward Executive Officers and Village Executive Officers should make sure that every school age individual attends school. Those parents and guardians whom their children do not attend classes regularly should be arrested and the rule of law to play its role. The study further recommends that parents should educate their children the dangers of early pregnancies and marriages, children should be given sexual education, the school laws related to pregnancies should be strengthened as well as the government should consider alternative means of ensuring that those children who have lost their parents attend school and are handled accordingly.

Index Terms- Truancy, education, child pregnancy, peer groups

I. INTRODUCTION

Truancy is the serious problem in Tanzania especially in cities. According to the Basic Education Statistics report of 2009/10 released by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training recently, Form Two has the highest number of student drop outs which stands at 9,627. The report also indicates that the main reasons that prompt students to drop out of school is truancy 36.2 %. The report shows that drop outs due to truancy decreased from 68.7 % in 2008 to 36.2 % in the following year. However, the situation has been attributed to truancy, the tendency, which diminishes student's performance.

Education can be defined as the transmission of the values and accumulation of knowledge of a society; it is designed to guide students in learning a culture, molding behavior in the ways of adulthood, and directing them toward eventual role in society. Education is there to help people become useful members of the society, should also help them to develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage and live more satisfying lives.

A study titled causes and impacts of truancy among primary school pupils in Tanzania conducted in 2002 reveals that parents are child's first and perhaps most important teachers as they teach their children attitudes, habits and values that help to shape their character and remain with them throughout their life, but few parents have neither time nor ability to teach their children everything they need to know. They turn over to many educators; thus, it is too difficult to afford life without education since education is the foundation of human life, (Restuta Shirima 2002) however truancy is the big problem hindering academic performance among secondary school students in Tanzania, Kigamboni ward in Dar es Salaam inclusive.

The term knowledge refers to the information, understanding and skills that you gain through education or experience. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 6th ed)

The term training refers to the acquisition of [knowledge](#), [skills](#), and [competencies](#) as a result of the teaching of [vocational](#) or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. It forms the core of [apprenticeships](#) and provides the backbone of content at [institutes of technology](#). (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Education attainment is an important determinant of ones better life in all aspects, if some missed education he or she can not think further than what he or she just sees, mostly people with no education have got few chances or opportunities of

getting job keeping in mind the level of unemployment is increasing year after year. Also a person with no education lives in isolation where he or she isolates himself or herself because she or he can not match with today's world, developments, for example developments in communication where people are communicating through e-mails, Skype, all these requires one to have some sort of education. If you want to compete for a post in government leadership you should be educated at least be a degree holder for higher posts like Member of Parliament.

A 1990 study by Obondo and Dhadphale reported that about 10 % of school non attendance by children in Kenya was due to truancy. Ollay studied 169 street youths in Ibadan, Nigeria and about 47% of these had a history of truancy. These studies suggest an association between truancy and being on the streets as well as that truancy is an important contributor of non-attendance at school.

According to Rozumah Bahamdin (2003), movement of students from one class to another class provides some of the students the opportunity not to go to the class and these movements from one class to another class make them dare to play truant.

Truancy has been labeled one of the top ten major problems in this country's schools, negatively affecting the future of the youth. In fact, absentee rates have reached as high as 30 percent in some cities. In New York City, about 150,000 out of 1,000,000 students are absent daily. The Los Angeles Unified School District reports that 10 percent of its students are absent each day. (Azizi Yahya et al 2010)

Tanzania's state education system is under performing and excludes a range of children, primarily those who are poor, those from difficulty family backgrounds, and those who have special education needs. Children in such circumstances are particularly at risk of non enrolment, exclusion, truancy and dropping out from school. According to the Basic Education Statistics report of 2009/10 released by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training recently, Form Two has the highest number of student drop outs which stands at 9,627. The report also indicates that the main reasons that prompt students to drop out of school is truancy (36.2 per cent) followed by pregnancies (20.4 per cent).

II. APPLIED METHODOLOGY

Theory of Truancy and its impacts

Education attainment is a crucial predictor of several health-related lifestyles and premature mortality. However truant behaviors have potential to curtail possibilities of meaningful academic achievement. Truancy is a predictor of multiple health risk behaviors among adolescents. Truant adolescents have been reported to engage in risky sexual practices, illicit drug use, alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking. Henry suggested that the unsupervised time that adolescents have when they are truant allows them to initiate and maintain unhealthy behaviors. (Azizi Yahya et al 2010)

Truancy in childhood may be associated with adverse social and health outcome later in life. Studies have reported that adults who were truant as adolescents were more likely to experience marital or job instability and psychological maladjustment when compared to their counterparts who were not truant as adolescents. (Azizi Yahya et al 2010)

The students' notoriousness are not only confined to smoking cigarettes, fighting with each other or behaving obscenely but also involving dumping babies, running away from home, free sex and mingling. According to Belthelheim (1950), now they even dare to commit serious criminal acts such as joining bad syndicate and become gangsters, murder, with or without firearms burglar, rape, prostitution, gambling, vandalism, drug abuse, alcoholic, and pornography.

Absenteeism is detrimental to student's achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Clearly, students who miss school fall behind their peers in the classroom. This, in turn leads to low self-esteem and increase the likelihood that at-risk students will drop out of school. (Azizi Yahya et al 2010)

In longitudinal study of African-American males, Robins and Retcliff (1978) found that of those students who were often truant in high school and primary 75% failed to graduate. Failure to graduate, in turn, is associated with diminished earning potential in adulthood and other poor outcome.

About 3,210 secondary school students in Mtwara Region are not attending classes regularly due to lack of basic needs. Data from region education office show that 3,208 missed regular class lessons in the region. However, the situation has been attributed to truancy, the tendency, which diminishes student's performance. Pass rate in secondary schools in Mtwara dropped from 60.4% in 2009 to 29% last year. (The Citizen 19th October 2011)

The Ziwani Secondary School headmaster, Mr. Abdallah Kombo, said truancy is one of the challenges hindering student's academic performance. About 40 students, including girls, failed to complete their secondary education at the school in the year 2011 due to truancy among other factors. "We enrolled 106 students in 2008, but only 67, out of them are 49 boys and 18 girls completed Form Four while 39 students, including 13 boys, failed to graduate due to truancy, pregnancy and transfer," the headmaster said. (The Citizen, 19th October, 2011)

Related studies about truancy based on education were done, according to the Encyclopedia vol.VI E pp 87-103. Most countries spend a large amount of time and money to provide formal education for their citizens. The school system of all modern nations provides both general education and vocational training. Most countries also provide special education programs for disabled or gifted children. The book explains that effective classroom is one in which a warm relationship exists between teachers and students as the teacher selects contents and instructional strategies and use skills for better instructions and classroom management to improve students achievement.

There is significant evidence that such an environment leads to higher understanding and transfer of learning (Hunter 1982, Comings 1985). When this mutual respect and cooperation are absent, tension builds up between individuals and problems of discipline soon emerge.

Most parents do not visit school except in response to problems. Parents' involvement in the school activities is likely to be related to their own educational levels, and hence many illiterate parents may need encouragement to become involved in the running of schools. Parent attitudes towards education particularly not encouraging girls to acquire good education are also critical to students' performance. Potentiality exists for

academic based parents in all schools possibly at close of the term before the June breaks, Restuta Shirima (2002).

Absenteeism is a serious problem for most schools in Tanzania. In most schools, attendance deteriorates in the higher classes i.e. form III and IV girls absenteeism is lower than boys who are perceived as having less desire to learn more and likely to be involved in petty trade. The most common reason for absenteeism is illness followed by death occurring in the family. Indeed illness is a recurring factor which contributes strongly to absenteeism, dropout and non-enrolment. (Basic education statistics report 2009/10).

Drug abuse is a complex health and social problem which affect both developed and developing countries. It is sometimes referred to as substance or chemical abuse. Drug abuse among students has increased and has now become a source of public concern specifically among parents or guardians and teachers. Many students engage in drug abuse due to peer pressure, home environment, drug access, smoking habits, living in areas and family members influence. Children adopting to parents' character this result into the increase of school dropouts, unwanted pregnancies and death related due to drug abuse which has caused serious threat to national health and welfare, Restuta Shirima 2002.

According to the basic Education Statistics report 2009/10, student dropout rate in secondary schools is much higher in Ordinary Level and lower in Advanced Level classrooms in the country. Form Two has the highest number of student dropouts which stands at 9,627.

Sample size, area of the study and selection procedure

This study used simple random sampling. Data were obtained from the random list (the sampling frame or sampling list) which included the ward education officers, head teachers, parents and students themselves. Both had a chance to participate in the study. The study was conducted in Temeke municipality particularly the Kigamboni ward. The study area was chosen as it suited the researchers in terms of resources (time and cost) and social – geographical familiarity which were instrumental in getting reliable information. A sample of 60 respondents comprising of 30 male respondents and 30 female respondents was chosen. Employed sampling technique proved feasible and practical for obtaining information required from different respondents within Kigamboni ward in Temeke municipality.

Data collection

A closed and open – ended structured questionnaire were used in collecting primary data. The questionnaires were administered in English while Kiswahili language was used to facilitate communication and avoiding communication barriers. The researchers carried self administered questionnaires and supplemented information by secondary data which were extracted from official sources.

Data analysis

The analysis of data was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists). The study employed regression analysis to explore the extent with which truancy leads to poor academic performance among secondary school students. Correlation coefficient was used to measure how strong or weak the variables in consideration are related. In data analysis, relationships or differences between variables are subjected to statistical tests of significance existing among data. Data analysis involves three phases including the data preparation, descriptive analysis and the hypothesis testing.

Data preparation was performed immediately after the completion of data collection. The aim was to make data as error free as possible (Amin, 2005 p. 306). This phase involved activities such as editing, coding, computer data entry and the verification of the accuracy of the data to be entered onto the computer so that they are amenable to analysis.

The description analysis was the second phase of data analysis aiming at describing characteristics of the sample (Amin, 2005). The respondent's demographic characteristics were analyzed and presented in tables. Testing of hypothesis using SPSS to check the relationship between variables in the study ended the last phase of data analysis.

III. FINDINGS

Truancy and academic performance among secondary school students

The result in Table 1 below revealed that out of 60 respondents, 31(51.7%) respondents strongly agreed that poor academic performance among secondary school students is due to truancy, 23(38.3%) respondents agreed that poor academic performance among secondary school students is due to truancy. This signifies that poor academic performance among secondary school students is due to truancy, since students are not attending classes at the end of the day knows nothing to answer when in exams.

Table 1: Truancy and academic performance among secondary school students: (N=60)

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	31	51.7	51.7
Agree	23	38.3	90.0
Undecided	4	6.7	96.7
Strongly disagree	2	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2012

The number of days a student is likely to attend to school in a month period

The information presented in table 2 below suggests that, majority of the respondents of which are students attends school

for at least 20 days a month which culminates to 55.0%. Parents do go to school once in a while when there is a need to.

Table 2: Number of days a student is likely to attend to school in a month period: (N=60)

Days	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
5	8	13.3	13.3
10	73	11.7	25.0
20	33	55.0	80.0
30	12	20.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2012

The other possible contributing factors to poor academic performance

Respondents were asked to rank the most contributing factor to poor academic performance among secondary school students. They were provided five factors as options including; drug abuse, truancy, peer groups, early child pregnancy, and lack of seriousness in classroom.

From table 3 below, it is revealed that lack of seriousness is the major factor that contributes to poor academic performance

among secondary schools. 25(41.7%) of respondents reported lack of seriousness in classroom to be the most contributing factor that leads to poor performance, 14(23.3%) said poor academic performance is due to truancy, 9(15%) said it is due to drug abuse, 8(13.3%) said is due to peer groups while 4(6.7%) believes that poor academic performance is caused by early child pregnancy.

Table 3: The other possible contributing factors to poor academic performance: (N = 60)

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Drug abuse	9	15.0	15.0
Truancy	14	23.3	38.3
Peer groups	8	13.3	51.7
Early child pregnancy	4	6.7	58.3
Lack of seriousness in classroom	25	41.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2012

The relationship between poor parental guide and truancy

Table 4 below represents the respondent responses on the relationship between poor parental guide and truancy. 35(58.3%) strongly agreed that truancy is due to poor parental guide,

21(35%) agreed, 3(5%) were undecided while 1(1.7%) disagreed. The majority of respondents agreed on the statement that poor parental guide influences truancy among secondary school students.

Table 4: The relationship between poor parental guide and truancy (N= 60)

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	35	58.3	58.3
Agree	21	35.0	93.3
Undecided	3	5.0	98.3
Disagree	1	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2012

Correlation between drug abuse and poor academic performance

Table 5 below illustrates on the correlation between drug abuse and poor performance. The field results reveal that 51.7% of the respondents agreed on the positivity between drug abuse

and poor performance among secondary school students in Kigamboni ward.

Table 5: Correlation between drug abuse and poor academic performance

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	31	51.7	51.7
Agree	18	30.0	81.7
Undecided	4	6.7	88.3
Disagree	5	8.3	96.7
Strongly disagree	2	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2012

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The result from the study has revealed that poor academic performance is a problem and it has been growing. 51.7% of the respondents has agreed that truancy is a latent base for poor academic performance among secondary school students in Kigamboni ward. This number is alarming and therefore there should be a wake-up call for government and society to redefine the effectiveness of the current education curriculum and education policies. In contrary poor performance in Tanzania secondary schools is not only caused by attendance characteristics alone but there are other factors which also cause poor performance like poverty, earl child pregnancy, drug abuse, peer groups and lack of seriousness in classroom

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Education stakeholders together with the government in collaboration with Ward Executive Officers and Village Executive Officers should make sure that every school age individual attends school as education curricular, parents and guardians who their children do not attend classes regularly should be arrested and the rule of law to play its role.
- ii. Parents should educate their children of the dangers of pregnancies and early marriages, also children should be given sexual education and the school laws related to pregnancies should be strengthened.
- iii. The government should consider alternative means of ensuring that those children who have lost their parents attend school and are handled accordingly.

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